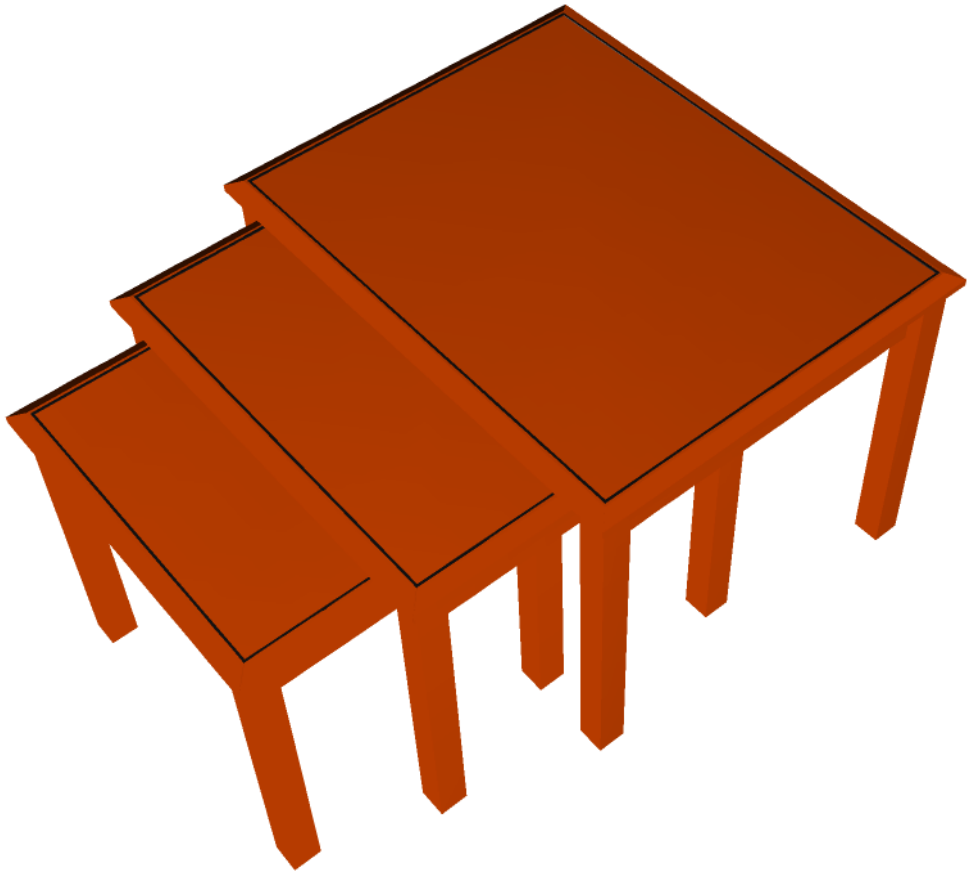
Nesting Tables

Popular Mechanics

Classics

Interactive 3D Model

Activate 3D



3D Workshop Hints + Tips

Rotate Pan Zoom

Click to watch an animation of assembly and disassembly

Click to change the look of the model

Model made in Alibre Design

Click here to learn more

Alibre

Nesting Tables

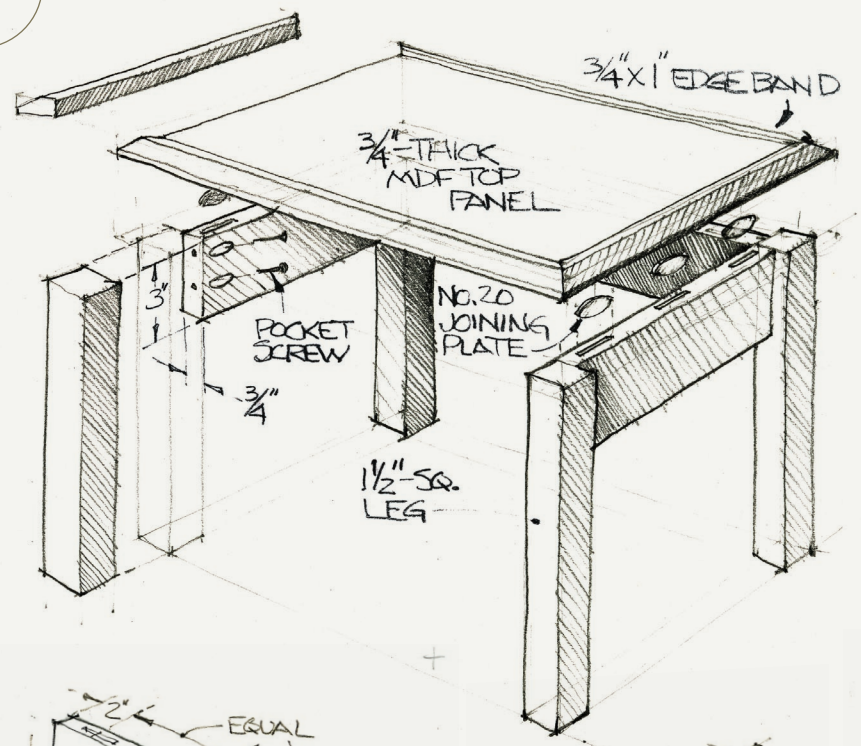
Tools & Materials

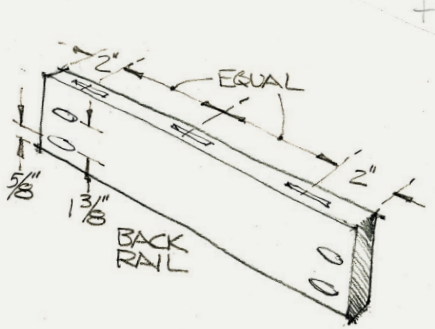
WOOD
We chose FSC-certified mahogany for our set. It's a pricey wood, but these tables don't require that much. If the 2-in. stock is difficult to find, laminate the legs from 1-in.-thick material.

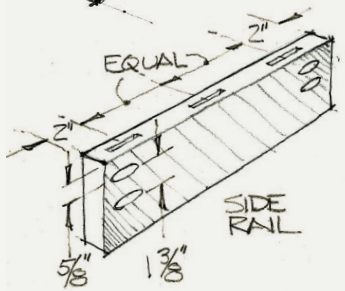
TOOLS
A table saw makes the ripping easier and produces accurate crosscuts. For the pocket-screw holes, we used a Kreg Rocket Jig Kit (kregtool.com). As an alternative to a plate joiner, you can screw down the top before painting and cover the screws with plugs.

FINISHING SUPPLIES
120- and 220-grit sandpaper, masking tape, Behlen Solar Lux medium brown

1

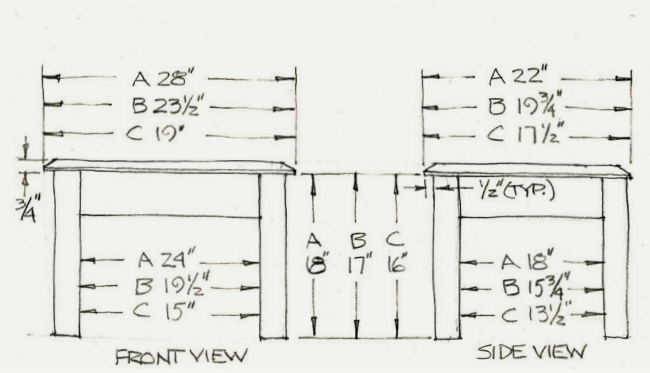






After ripping the wood to width for all the legs, rails and edge banding, plane or sand the sawn surfaces and cut the pieces to finished length. We've coded the dimensions (below) A, B and C to represent the tables in descending size; mark the pieces after they're cut so they don't get mixed up. Trim the MDF panels to 2 in. under their finished sizes of the tops, but cut the edge-band strips slightly longer than they need to be. For simpler construction, eliminate the edge band and cut the MDF to exact size.

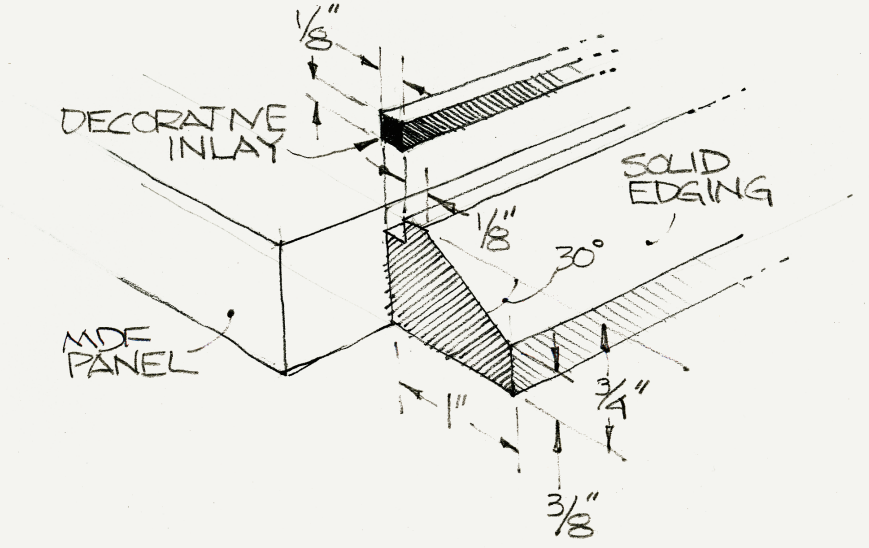
You'll need a pocket jig (see Tools & Materials) to make the angled holes for driving screws through the ends of the rails into the legs. To keep the screws in the side rails from hitting the screws in the back rails, offset the pocket holes on each (below left). Then cut the joining-plate slots in the rails.



mahogany stain, Behlen retarder to slow drying (available at woodworker .com), Sherwin-Williams No. 6414 Rice Paddy flat interior latex paint, polyure-thane varnish

2

The solid-wood edge band and black inlay that we installed around the top panel add a touch of class to this otherwise simple design. If you opt for the decorative black inlay, the ⅛-in.-sq. strips, called black-dyed lines, are available at Dover Inlay Manufacturing (doverinlay.com). They come in 36-in. lengths; you'll need 12. We had to buy more than necessary to meet the company's minimum $25 order, but it was worth it for the look we were after. Use a router table to shape the ⅛ x ¼-in. rabbet in each edge piece. Apply glue sparingly, and use masking tape to hold the black strips in place while the glue sets. Then, cut the miters. Apply glue and clamp the solid edges in place, one piece at a time, allowing about 30 minutes setting time for each. Use a 30-degree chamfer bit to rout the beveled edges, and cut the joining-plate slots.



3

It's easiest to finish the tops and bases before they're joined. First, make sure all surfaces are sanded with 120- and 220-grit paper. If you're staining the wood, it's okay to go right over the black inlay and top panel. The stain won't show up on the strip and the top will be painted anyway. Then, mask the edge banding and paint the top panels with a short-nap roller; two or three coats should do the job. When the paint is dry, remove any roughness with 220-grit sandpaper, apply two or three coats of satin polyurethane to all surfaces, and attach the tops with plates and glue.

Quick Tip

Stresses in the wood often cause the piece to warp after it's cut along the grain. The solution is to rip over-size, plane one edge true, then rip to finished size.

PLATE JOINT LOCATING

To produce accurately positioned slots in the rails and top, first mark each slot location on the outer faces of the rails, then clamp each rail to your work surface, align the plate joiner registration mark with the marks on the rail, and cut the slots. Mark the inside rail positions on the undersides of the tops. Clamp each rail in position along its line, and register the joiner against the rail edges and align with the marks on the rails. Finally, make downward cuts into the tops.